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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Monday, September 12, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "ORANGE PEKOE AND CHOW MEIN." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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Whene'er you see me wan and weak, Oh
Bring me a cup of Orange Peek-oe!

If I appear to be a wreck, Oh
Restore me quick, with Orange Peck-oe!

"That," says our correspondent, "shows the state of mind I'm in. Is it Peek-oe? Or is it Peck-oe? I suppose I could look it up, but even then I' wouldn't remember. I know, because I have looked it up, time and again--and still the pronunciation eludes me.

"So let's call it tea, and be done with it. Now here's a little question-naire, to test your knowledge of tea.

"First question: How much tea was examined by the U. S. Tea Examiners in the year ending June 30, 1938? What's your guess? Let's see how close you come to the right answer. . . Ten thousand pounds? Ten million pounds? Fifty million pounds?

"I'd like to know how many people came within a million pounds of the correct answer--which is eighty-five million, 589 thousand, 539 pounds. In round numbers, eighty-five and a half million pounds.

"That's a little less than was imported the year before, although the amount hasn't changed much during the past five years. Now, before we leave this question--everybody know the answer? Eighty-five and a half million pounds of tea, imported by the United States, in the fiscal year ending last June.

"Now here's another question: Where was this tea examined and by whom?

"And here's the answer: It was examined by representatives of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, at the ports of entry--New York, Boston, San Francisco, Seattle. A small amount was examined at Honolulu. More than half of all the tea entering the United States came in by way of New York.

"The next question is an old familiar one. If you don't know the answer," says our official correspondent, "I shall feel that I have failed in my duty, because at least once a year, for the past five years, we have discussed this topic.

"The question is this: What are the three general classifications of tea?

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"The answer: Green tea, black tea, and oolong.

"Green, which is unfermented, comes from -- where? Well, mainly, from China and Japan. Although this year, a small shipment of green tea, 40 pounds, came from Brazil. Green tea made up a trifle more than one-fifth of the total last year.

"Next, black tea -- fully fermented -- most popular of all in the United States. Almost three-fourths of the total amount was black tea. Black tea comes from India, Ceylon and the Netherlands Indies, with smaller amounts from Japan, Formosa, Africa, and the Congou type from China.

"Now we come to the third general classification -- Oolong, or semi-fermented. All tea of this type comes from Formosa and China. There was a considerable drop last year in the amount of Oolong tea imported.

"One more question: How much tea was rejected? Such a very small amount, it's hardly worth noting--a little over three-tenths of one percent. Shippers in the tea countries take care to send a product that complies with our standards--and that's why the amount of tea rejected is so small."

Now that's all of our tea lesson for today, but while we're on the subject of Oriental products--here's an item about chow mein, which means "fried noodles." The Chinese say "eat noodles for long life," so bring on your chopsticks, and we'll have a dish of chow mein--for long life.

Well--we've strayed pretty far from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, and that item about chow mein. Here it is, quoting directly:

"The New York Station reports a sanitary survey of plants manufacturing chow mein for distribution to lunch counters and restaurants. The business was found to be in the hands of a small number of firms, mostly Chinese. These firms do not keep stocks of the finished product on hand, but distribute it as soon as it is made. Inspectors who made the survey found all the Chinese firms extremely eager to comply with all suggestions for sanitation. They are trying to keep their establishments in a clean, sanitary condition at all times. Cooking apparatus, largely made of metal, was found to be brightly scoured and free from food residue.

"Only one firm, and this one was not operated by Chinese, was unsatisfactory, and was therefore reported to the New York City Department of Health for appropriate action."

I was about to say this concludes our Monday report, but I see here's a postscript:

"P.S. About that orange peek-oe, or peck-oe, I looked up the word again. Mr. Webster says you can use either pronunciation, but if you go to Great Britain you'd better say peck-oe. However the word is pronounced, it refers to a grade, or size, of the tea leaf."

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